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ABSTRACT

It was the purpose of this study to establish whether or not supervisor verbal style was related to teacher perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their supervisor. More specifically, the hypothesis was that indirect supervisor styles will result in higher quality interpersonal relationships with respect to the dimensions of Regard, Empathy, Unconditionality of Regard, and Congruence. The general procedure involved the tape recording of a supervisory conference between a student teacher and the college student teaching supervisor. As soon after the conference as possible, the student teacher responded to a questionnaire designed to measure his perceptions of the quality of the interpersonal relations existing between him and his supervisor. Data were collected from twenty-two college supervisors and eighty-five of their student teachers at two central New York universities. It appears from the data that the independent variable is not a useful predictor of the quality of supervisor-student teacher interpersonal relationships. (BW/Author)

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SUPERVISOR VERBAL STYLE AS RELATED TO THE QUALITY OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

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Introduction

It was the purpose of this study to establish whether or not supervisor verbal style was related to teacher perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their supervisor. The points of view taken for this study are as follows:

1. Supervision may be viewed as a helping relationship involving "learning" as a task for the teacher and "helping" as a task for the supervisor.
2. Supervisor verbal style characterized by relatively heavy loading on indirect behavior may result in a set of interpersonal relations that are more positive than those where the loading on indirect behavior is not so heavy (Blumberg, 1968).
3. The establishment of quality interpersonal relations in supervision is a necessary prerequisite if significant learning is to take place.

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Rationale

In recent years considerable time and much research effort has been expended in the analysis of classroom teacher behavior. One outcome since 1960 has been the development and increasing use of systematic

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classroom observation systems which focus upon teacher-student and student-student interactions taking place in the classroom. The ultimate goal according to Flanders (1967:103) ". . . is to achieve understanding of teacher-pupil interaction, and, in particular, to specify conditions in which learning is maximized." A second outcome has been the identification of noncognitive factors which affect learning. Although identified prior to 1960 by a number of authors (Anderson, 1939; Withall, 1949; and Cogan, 1956), Flanders more recently identifies one such factor, that of social-emotional climate. He states (1965:3):

> The term 'classroom climate' refers to generalized attitudes toward the teacher and the class that the pupils share in common in spite of individual differences. The development of these attitudes is an outgrowth of classroom social interaction. As a result of participating in classroom activities, pupils soon develop common attitudes about how they like their class, the kind of person the teacher is, and how he will act in certain typical situations. These common attitudes color all aspects of classroom behavior, creating a social atmosphere, or climate, that appears to be fairly stable, once established.

From studies of classroom climate Flanders (1960) identifies two patterns of teacher influence or behavior. He labels these "direct" and "indirect." Indirectness is associated with more freedom of response by students. Examples of such behavior might be questioning, clarifying, accepting or extending student ideas, praising, and accepting feelings. Directness tends to restrict the freedom of response. This type of teaching would include giving directions, lecturing, criticizing, and justifying authority. Flanders' finding--which has been frequently replicated--was that, generally speaking, as teachers teach more

indirectly pupils learn more and have more favorable attitudes toward school.

It would seem then that if college supervisors are to guide (help) student teachers, the spotlight should be focused upon the college supervisors' behavior. Further, climate should be equally important as a factor affecting learning in interpersonal relations (dyadic conferences). Finally, the techniques employed in assessing teacher behavior (such as Flanders System for Interaction Analysis) have implications for judging supervisor effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework around which this study is built involves the concepts developed by Rogers (1958), Flanders (1960), and Blumberg (1970).

Helping Relations and Learning. From his work in psychotherapy, Rogers has developed a concept of the helping relationship. He defines this as, ". . . one in which one of the participants intends that there should come about, in one or both parties, more appreciation of, more expression of, more functional use of the latent inner resources of the individual" (Rogers, 1958:3). Relationships between parent and child, physician and patient, counselor and client, and--most importantly for this study--teacher and student, are seen as included by this definition. Going beyond this, Rogers then formulated what he saw as the conditions which influence significant learning in helping relations. Significant learning is defined as, ". . . learning which is more than an accumulation of facts. It is learning which makes a difference--in the individual's behavior, in the course of

action he chooses in the future, in his attitudes and in his personality. It is a pervasive learning which is not just an accretion of knowledge, but which interpenetrates with every portion of his existence" (Rogers, 1959:232). The conditions influencing this learning are:

1. Two persons are in contact.
2. The first person, whom we shall term the student, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious. Learning is more likely to get under way if the student is anxious, rather than merely vulnerable.
3. The second person, whom we shall term the teacher, is congruent in the relationship.
4. The teacher is experiencing unconditional positive regard toward the student.
5. The teacher is experiencing an empathic understanding of the student's internal frame of reference.
6. The student perceives, at least to a minimal degree, conditions 4 and 5, the unconditional positive regard of the teacher for him, and the empathic understanding of the teacher (Rogers, 1959:213).

Additionally, Rogers, in a series of papers (1957, 1958, 1959, 1962, 1965, and 1967), has identified the qualities or behaviors of therapists which facilitate significant learning in their clients. These qualities are as follows: realness or congruence, acceptance or unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding. It is necessary that these qualities be communicated to the learner (Rogers, 1959:235). The degree or level to which the teacher is able to communicate these qualities is seen as being influenced by the client

(or student) but most significantly by the behavior of the therapist (or teacher) (Rogers, 1962).

Interaction Analysis. The second aspect of the theoretical framework involves a method of description and analysis of supervisor-student teacher (dyadic) interaction which is conceptually related to the method of classroom observation developed by Flanders (1965). Teacher behavior patterns of "directness" and "indirectness" associated respectively with allowing more freedom of response by students and with restricting freedom of response by students can also be identified for supervisors in dyadic conference with student teachers. Blumberg (Simon & Boyer, 1970) has developed an observation instrument for this purpose. There are 15 categories (as opposed to 10 for the Flanders System for Interaction Analysis), 10 of which describe supervisor behavior, and one category for silence or confusion. Rousseau (1970) has previously demonstrated the viability of analyzing verbal behaviors during dyadic conferences as accurate and objective indices of supervisory behavior and style.

Signficance

The qualities of desirable interpersonal (helping) relations, although developed as descriptive for relationships in the therapist-client setting, are seen as applicable to the supervisor-student teacher relationship by Fiedler (1950), Tyler (1964), Soper and Combs (1962), and Combs and Soper (1963). Further, both Rogers (1958) and Combs and Snygg (1959) see the qualities of good helping relations as generally recognized by everyone. It would seem appropriate then to examine the quality of the interpersonal (helping) relationship in the

supervisory-student teacher dyad. Beyond that, if supervisors are to establish interpersonal relationships with student teachers such that "learning" and "helping" take place, it would appear important that the supervisory behavior patterns be oriented towards the establishment of a climate in dyadic interaction which promotes communicative freedom and openness.

Because a number of studies have shown that generally: "Increased teacher indirectness is associated with increased pupil growth in subject matter and more favorable attitudes" (Soar, 1968:1), it is inferred that more positive supervisor-student teacher interpersonal relations might be associated with increased supervisor indirectness. It seems important then to establish the form of the relationship between these variables.

Hypotheses

The major hypothesis of this study was that different supervisor verbal styles would result in differing teacher perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their supervisor. More specifically, indirect supervisor styles will result in higher quality interpersonal relationships with respect to the dimensions of Regard, Empathy, Unconditionality of Regard, and Congruence. To test this hypothesis, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There will be no significant linear or quadratic relationship between supervisor verbal style and the quality of Regard.
2. There will be no significant linear or quadratic relationship between supervisor verbal style and the quality of Empathy.

3. There will be no significant linear or quadratic relationship between supervisor verbal style and the quality of Unconditional Regard.

4. There will be no significant linear or quadratic relationship between supervisor verbal style and the quality of Congruence.

Procedures

The general procedure involved the tape recording of a supervisory conference between a student teacher and the college student teaching supervisor. Each supervisor was asked to tape at least three conferences and at most six conferences. Each conference taped was to be with a different student teacher and was understood to have a problem-solving focus. As soon after the conference as possible, the student teacher responded to a questionnaire designed to measure his perceptions of the quality of the interpersonal relations existing between him and his supervisor. Subsequent to the conference, the tape recording was analyzed by means of an interaction analysis system.

Sample

Data were collected from twenty-two college supervisors and eighty-five of their student teaches. The supervisors were employed by two large central New York universities for the purpose of supervising elementary and secondary student teachers during the Spring and Fall terms, 1971. These supervisors do not represent a random sample and, although the experience and ability of those who participated represent a broad range, the findings must be viewed with regard to this limitation.

Instruments

There were two instruments employed in this study. The first was the Supervisory Interaction System (Simon & Boyer, 1970), which defines 15 categories of verbal behavior occurring in dyadic conferences between supervisors and student teachers. Of these 15, ten reflect supervisor behavior, four reflect student teacher behavior and one indicates silence or confusion during the conference. These categories are described below:

SUPERVISOR BEHAVIOR

Category 1. Support-inducing Communications Behavior. This category includes all statements on the part of the supervisor, with the exception of praise, the effect of which is to build a "Healthy" climate between him and the teacher. Behavior that releases tension is in this category as is that which conveys an acceptance of feelings. Encouragement is categorized here.

Category 2. Praise. This is behavior on the part of the supervisor that connotes primarily the value judgment of "good" in connection with a teacher's idea, plan of action, past behavior, feelings, etc.

Category 3. Accepts or uses teacher's ideas. Included here are statements that clarify, build on, or develop ideas or suggestions by a teacher.

Category 4. Asks for information. This is behavior by the supervisor that is aimed at asking for clarification or orientation about a problem or situation under consideration. It is factually oriented and is not concerned with opinions or ways of doing things.

Category 5. Giving information. This is the opposite of Category 4. It involves the supervisor giving objective information to the teacher, orienting, summarizing, etc.

Category 6. Asks for opinions. This category is meant to describe supervisor behavior the aim of which is to ask the teacher to analyze or evaluate something that has occurred, is occurring, or may occur in the classroom or in the interaction taking place.

Category 7. Asks for suggestions. In this category are statements by the supervisor that ask the teacher to think about ways of doing things or ways in which things might have been done differently. It has an action orientation, past, present, or future. Category 7 also refers to asking for ways in which the supervisor and teacher might work together.

Category 8. Gives opinions. This category is the opposite of Category 6. It has the same substantive meaning with the exception that the supervisor is "giving" not "asking."

Category 9. Gives suggestions. In a like manner as Category 8, this one has the opposite meaning as 7. The difference is in the "giving" instead of "asking."

Category 10. Criticism. This category includes all negative value judgments about the teacher, his behavior in the classroom, teaching methodology, competency, etc. It also includes any behavior on the part of the supervisor that can be interpreted as defensive, aggressive, or tension-producing.

STUDENT TEACHER BEHAVIOR

Category 11. Asks for information, opinions, or suggestions. This is task-oriented behavior on the part of the teacher. It is the teacher-counterpart of Categories 4, 6 and 7.

Category 12. Gives information, opinions, or suggestions. This category, similar to Category 11, is the teacher-counterpart to Categories 5, 8 and 9.

Category 13. Positive social emotional behavior. This behavior is described in the same way as that in Category 1. It is not task-oriented and helps build the supervisory relationship. Encouragement would probably not be found as constituting very much in the way of a teacher's repertoire in this category. Statements that convey agreement by choice are part of this category, but those that indicate compliance in the face of supervisor power are not.

Category 14. Negative social emotional behavior. Any behavior on the part of the teacher that tends to disrupt the supervisory relationship, produce tension or convey defensiveness on his part is part of this category. Compliance in the face of supervisory power is defined as defensiveness as is rationalization.

Category 15. Silence or confusion. This category is used when there is silence or both supervisor and teacher are talking at the same time so that it becomes impossible to categorize behavior specifically. An exception would be when there is silence after a behavior on the part of either supervisor or teacher that seems to have the effect of producing defensiveness (ehter Category 10 or 14, depending at whom the original behavior was aimed).

Tape recordings were made of each conference and replayed at a later date for purposes of analysis. This analysis, procedurally similar to Flanders (1965), involves categorizing each behavior by number either every three seconds, or when a change in behavior occurs. These recorded category numbers are then transposed to a 15 x 15 cell matrix. The matrix analysis provides a qualitative and quantitative description of the nature of the interaction taking place during the conference. Percentages of particular verbal behaviors (supervisor or student teacher) may be calculated.

The second instrument is the Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, 1962). This instrument provides a measure of student teacher perceived quality existing in the interpersonal relationships he or she shares with his college supervisor. Although originally developed for use in therapeutic settings, the instrument has since been used satisfactorily in a number of different non-therapeutic settings where interpersonal relations were assessed (Emmerling, 1961; Thompson, 1967; Blumberg, 1968; Churukian, 1970; and Mason, 1970).

The Relationship Inventory is a 64-item questionnaire that is divided into four sub-scales of Regard, Empathy, Unconditionality of Regard, and Congruence. Each sub-scale consists of sixteen items of which eight are positively oriented and eight negatively oriented. Each item may be rated from plus three to minus three. The negatively oriented items are constructed so that a "minus" rating answer to any of them is treated as a "plus" as far as interpersonal relations are concerned. Thus, on each scale, it is possible to get a total score ranging from +48 to -48. And, as far as a total score on the entire Inventory is concerned, the range is from +192 to -192.

Barrett-Lennard (1962) established reliability estimates by coefficient of split-half reliability on each scale. The mean of the four scales was .87 as was the mean for test-retest of the four scales. Validity is assumed based upon the developmental process by which the Inventory items exist and mean intercorrelations found at .45.

Descriptive Statistics for the Supervisory Interaction System Data

The data from each conference matrix were summed to form a composite matrix for each supervisor. (The coding of the supervisor behavior for each conference was accomplished by a trained observer. His coefficient of inter-observer reliability when compared with expert judgments, as estimated by the Scott method (Flanders, 1965:25), was .85. His intra-observer reliability, assessed in the same manner, was .94.). A composite score which served as the basis for classifying each supervisor as to relative indirectness was then derived through modification of procedures suggested by Soar (1962). Accordingly, each supervisor was ranked on each of seven variables assumed to be indicative of teacher indirectness. The rankings were then converted to standard scores. The seven standard scores--one for each variable--were then summed for each supervisor. The resultant single score, representing a quantified measure of each supervisor's relative indirectness, became the independent variable in the regression analysis. The variables forming the composite score are as follows:

1. Revised indirect/direct ratio (i/d). This ratio is computed by dividing the sum of the frequencies in the most indirect categories (totals in columns 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7) by the sum of the frequencies in the

most direct categories (totals in columns 8, 9, and 10). The higher this ratio the more indirect a supervisor's behavioral style.

2. Indirect Response Ratio. This ratio is computed by dividing the sum of the frequencies in cells 11-1, 11-2, 11-3, 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, 14-1, 14-2, and 14-3 by the sum of the frequencies in cells 11-8, 11-9, 12-8, 12-9, 12-10, 13-8, 13-9, 13-10, 14-8, 14-9, and 14-10. The higher this ratio the more indirect a supervisor's response to a teacher statement.

3. Extended Indirect Influence. The quantitative value of this supervisor behavior is found by computing the sum of the following cell percentages: 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3. This value represents the amount of emphasis that the supervisor gives to using teacher ideas; extending and amplifying teacher statements; and accepting teacher feelings. (Expressed as a percentage of total number of behaviors)

4. Teacher Free Response cells. The total cell percentages in cells 5-11, 5-12, 5-13, 5-14, 8-11, 8-12, 8-13, and 8-14 indicates that while the supervisor was giving information and opinions, the teacher on his own volition, made a statement or asked a question. This value is indicative of the extent to which there is present an atmosphere encouraging the teacher to participate without cues from the supervisor. (Expressed as a percentage of the total number of behaviors)

5. Teacher Extended Response cells. The total cell percentages in cells 11-11, 12-12, 13-13, and 14-14 indicates that the teacher made responses for a period of time in excess of three seconds. Suggested here is an atmosphere present which allows teacher contribution of his own ideas and feelings at some length.

6. Supervisor Acceptance cells. The total cell percentages in cells 11-3, 12-3, 13-3, and 14-3 indicates the percentage of behaviors characterized as supervisor valuing teacher participation.

7. Extended Supervisor Support cell. The percentage of behaviors in the 1-1 cell indicates the percentage of the supervisor's behavior involved in more than a cursory attempt to build a healthy climate between him and the teacher.

Descriptive Statistics for Relationship Inventory Data

The Relationship Inventory scores for the student teachers of each supervisor were averaged on the variables of the Relationship Inventory. There was then a mean score for each supervisor.

Statistical Procedures

If, according to Soar (1968), there is an optimal level of teacher indirectness beyond which additional indirectness does not yield corresponding gains in desirable student behavioral outcomes such as subject matter growth and more favorable attitudes and if a similar statement can be made about optimal levels of indirectness in supervisor-student teacher interpersonal relations, then the possibility exists that the relationships between the variables in

this study are described by a quadratic function. The data were analyzed in line with this notion by fitting "first" and then "second" order polynomial regression equations to the data (Hays, 1963; and Natrella, 1963). Subsequent to the linear curve fitting, an F test was performed to determine if such a function would account for a significant amount of the total variation. This step was repeated after quadratic curve fitting. A significant F test is indicative of either a linear or quadratic relationship. The TSAR stepwise multiple regression program was used for this analysis.

Results

Examination of Tables 1-4 indicates that the null hypotheses 1-4 in this study could not be rejected. That is to say, for purposes of this study one must conclude that there is no linear or quadratic relationship existing between supervisor verbal style (the composite indirect score) and the quality of interpersonal relationships (i.e., Regard, Empathy, Unconditional Regard, and Congruence).

Discussion and Conclusions

It appears, for the data generated by this study at least, that the independent variable is not a useful predictor of the quality of supervisor-student teacher interpersonal relationships.

As previously mentioned, the literature does show that indirect teaching behavior is generally associated with increased student growth in subject matter and more favorable student attitudes toward his teacher and his school. It was only Soar (1968) who talked of some optimal level of indirectness for teaching. Coupling these findings with the

Table 1
STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORS' LEVEL OF REGARD

Source	df	Sum of Squares	F	P	Percentage of Total Variation
Total	21	148,531.00			
Reduction-Linear	1	472.21	3.52	> .05	14.9
Reduction-Quadratic	1	125.92	.94	> .05	4
Residual	19	2,549.92			

Table 2
STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORS' EMPATHY

Source	df	Sum of Squares	F	P	Percentage of Total Variation
Total	21	108,847.77			
Reduction-Linear	1	13,823.67	2.91	> .05	12.7
Reduction-Quadratic	1	761.93	.17	> .05	< 1
Residual	19	94,267.17			

Table 3
STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORS' UNCONDITIONAL REGARD

Source	df	Sum of Squares	F	P	Percentage of Total Variation
Total	21	610.18			
Reduction-Linear	1	1.22	.04	> .05	< 1
Reduction-Quadratic	1	5.49	.18	> .05	< 1
Residual	19	603.47			

Table 4
STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORS CONGRUENCE

Source	df	Sum of Squares	F	P	Percentage of Total Variation
Total	21	3,252.66			
Reduction-Linear	1	211.42	1.40	> .05	6.5
Reduction-Quadratic	1	13.01	.08	> .05	< 1
Residual	19	3,028.23			

theoretical formulations of Rogers (Mason, 1970) seems to lead one to a logical association of indirect teaching and quality interpersonal relations. Why then failure to substantiate this contention?

There are three rather strong explanations for the outcomes of this study. The first is based upon the nature of the vehicle chosen for study of the relations, namely, the college supervisor/student teacher dyad in student teaching. It is quite likely that the college supervisor does not establish a relationship with his student teacher in such a way that he can be seen to exhibit the characteristics of a helper. The fact that the college supervisor typically only sees the student teacher 3 to 5 times during the student teaching experience would bear this out.

The second explanation is parallel to the first. It was assumed for the study that the college supervisor would be acting in the role of a helper in a problem-solving situation. In cases where student teachers do not perceive this to be the case--that is, do not perceive the supervisor as a helper or teacher who could deal with problems--indirect teaching style could be of no concern.

Third is the issue of indirect style itself. Inspection of the data reveals a much narrower range of indirectness than reported by Soar (1968). Although the scores are not identical in composition to those of Soar, they are parallel such that more similarity in range was expected. In addition to the narrow range is a loading on negative scores. What this means is that the college supervisors for the most part did not demonstrate frequent indirect behavior. Again, choosing to examine these relationships using the college

supervisor/student teacher dyad appears to have been a mistake. Getting a true random sample of these dyads might expand the range of behavioral styles but still to consider is the true nature of the relationship.

On the more positive side, the data did approach significance ($p < .10$) for Regard and Empathy. The relationship was linear in each case. The same was not true for Unconditional Regard and Congruence. Neither of these approached significance at any level. This fact seems to support the explanation that college supervisors are not able to establish helping relationships with student teachers, given their limited contact.

What are the future research implications of these conclusions? There would seem to be two. Either write off the college supervisor completely or else, first, identify those dyads having frequent association (more than 3 to 5 times) and, then, identify those where the student teacher perceives the college supervisor in the role of a "helper."

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